

Oil and Water? The
challenges of working within
a Corrective Services
environment using a TC
approach

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Marngoneet Correctional Centre

The Marngoneet Correctional Centre is a 306 bed, medium security facility, providing intensive treatment and offender management programs for males who are at moderate to high risk of reoffending.



Marngoneet

The name Marngoneet is taken from the Wathaurong community language and means “to make new” reflecting our philosophy. The Centre is formed from 4 neighbourhoods. The three treatment communities function as independent communities adopting a number of TC principles – all prisoners participate as members of the community.



TC's in Prison

Caraniche works across seven prisons in Victoria delivering services on behalf of Justice Health. Two prisons; The former Bendigo Community Prison and Marngoneet have used TC principles to support treatment within the correctional setting. The Drug Treatment Unit at DPFC is a 10-bed female unit which also utilises TC principles to support change.



Bendigo to Marngoneet

Caraniche staff at Bendigo were provided with a unique opportunity to work closely with custodial staff and Treatment Support Officers to use the “community as method” principles. When Bendigo closed a review of the journey was completed which highlighted the significant challenges and unique opportunities of working in this way with prisoners.



Leaping the hurdles

Prisoner allocation to the community.

- There are many reasons why men arrive at Marngoneet and it is not always due to a choice of wishing to work within a TC philosophy.
- Managed through induction to the Marngoneet community as method process from the outset. Challenges managed via case conferencing jointly with custodial staff.



Hierarchy and safety in prison

- Prisoners traditionally have their own hierarchy based on offences, reputation and willingness to be violent.
- Marngoneet rewards behaviours which undermine this hierarchical system – Peer listeners have all been through treatment and model pro-social behaviour.



Staff training and development

- Custodial staff receive training focused on safety and security rather than TC principles – how do we support their TC learning?
- Each and every interaction is an opportunity to grow and learn. This takes a large investment by everyone involved.



More challenges

Staff rotation

- Custodial staff rotate every 6 months, clinical staff move on.....
- Embrace the change as an opportunity – the TC way!



Working together to make it work

The most significant learning taken from Bendigo to Marngoneet has been that you cannot implement community as method within a community of men if it does not first exist within the staff team. The same principles of respect, tolerance and challenges to grow provide the foundation for the community to operate.



Marngoneet – The mix





Thank you for your time!

